



NEWSLETTER

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The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict GPPAC Conference at the United Nations, New York July 19-21, 2005

The Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) received the premier place at the United Nations Global Conference on Prevention of Armed Conflict. RCSS Executive Director Prof Sridhar Khatri delivered the salient point in South Asian action agenda at the conference held at the UN General Assembly.

Speaking on behalf of South Asia, Prof Khatri said that one way to create a new culture of prevention of armed conflicts is through networking. "Civil society organizations are strongest when they work together, and networking is one of our greatest strengths," he stated.

Prof Khatri proposed the formulation of an international programme of action for prevention of conflicts and peace building. He said that such a programme of action, utilizing the capacities of all relevant actors, is needed to



South Asian participants at GPPAC Conference

maintain prevention as the fundamental goal of security institutions and international policy and practice. Drawing on the GPPAC Global Action Agenda such policies and practices should be based on:

- Justice as the ethical and political standard of action;

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Farewell Message



Prof. Sridhar K Khatri

It is hard to believe that my three-year assignment at RCSS is now complete. It has not only been a rich learning experience for me, but also a pleasure and privilege to be associated with the RCSS network that is made of many institutions and individuals who have distinguished themselves in the region and

the world. I am particularly grateful to the members of the Board of Directors and the International Research Committee, who made it much easier for me to complete my assignment with their generous support and cooperation. The support of many donor agencies who believe in the RCSS mission of developing a broader regional outlook on security issues has been essential to

the success of the Centre. Given the rapidly changing security environment in the region and the world at large, I am hopeful that they will continue to support the work of RCSS and many others will join us in this noble endeavor.

The strength of RCSS lies in the vision of the people who established the Centre more than thirteen years ago and the support it has received from people who believe in its objectives. Although there are many institutions in the region that deal with security issues, RCSS is the only regional institution of its kind that operates independent of government support and is able to function objectively on sensitive security matters even when governments and many national institutions are unable to address such issues openly. This speaks a lot about how activities of the Centre have been engineered to allow a broader discussion of both the traditional and non-traditional security issues facing the region.

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Role of Civil Society ... (Contd from page 1)

- Participatory nature of all conflict prevention and transformation programmes; and
- Dialogue as the supreme procedure

The RCSS is the regional facilitator for the Global Partnership on Prevention of Armed Conflicts and Prof Khatri said that it was a great privilege to be selected among the many most prestigious research and networking institutions in South Asia to represent the region at a United Nations Global Conference.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who was to address the GPPAC was absent due to a recent surgery and his speech was read by the Assistant Secretary General Stephen Stedman. In his message Annan emphasized the role of civil society organizations to mainstream prevention and constructive conflict management. “The world must advance the causes of security development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed,” he said. “Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security and it will not enjoy either, without respect for human rights”.

Farewell Message contd from page 1

I am sure that friends of RCSS will agree that in maintaining an open approach to security matters, RCSS has developed legitimacy for its works that is unprecedented in the region. The Indo-Pakistani conflicts continue to preoccupy the work of the Centre, and rightly so. Only our part of the world has three nuclear neighbours with a checkered history of recent conflicts, where attempts are being made to redefine a structure of relationship based on new economic and military capabilities. The Centre needs to continue to monitor the developments and offer policy options, particularly since the focus of global security concern has shifted to the region in the guise of “war on terrorism.”

RCSS has also taken the lead in the study of non-traditional security issues in South Asia, where more conceptual and empirical work need to be done. In an era where the Westphalian notion of state sovereignty is increasingly challenged by non-state actors and cross-border issues, the Centre has special responsibility in examining its implications for the region and suggesting options. Over the years RCSS has done seminal studies on confidence building measures for the states in South Asia and started work on conflict prevention at both inter- and intra- state level. More work needs to be done at the intra-state level by examining the role of civil society

Jan Egeland, the U.N’s Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, stated “We must not shrink from greater and more forceful advocacy in the event of severe humanitarian crises”. In an interview with ‘People Building Peace’ on the eve of the GPPAC (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict) Conference in which he argued that the failure to respond to “forgotten emergencies” in Africa has cost millions of lives and greatly increased the risk of prolonged conflict.

The GPPAC Conference was the culmination of three years of work involving over a thousand civil society groups and individuals from all corners of the globe, who have formed the international network, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, of ‘people building peace’.

Over the past three years, organisations and actors in fifteen regions worldwide have engaged in consultation, dialogue and research, exploring the roles of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This process led to fifteen Regional Conferences at which Regional Action Agendas on conflict prevention were adopted.

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actors who are increasingly recognized as a potent force whose participation in conflict prevention is indispensable.

It has been a special privilege for me to be involved with the young people of South Asia in our many programmes. Youths are the future, and the various awards and workshops designed by RCSS to groom the next generation of leaders in the region is something the Centre can be proud of. It is heartening to see that today there are many institutes in South Asia that offer awards and workshops, following the RCSS model. This is a special tribute to the success of RCSS programmes, which needs to be strengthened and expanded into the future.

As most of you are already aware by now, Prof. Syed Rifaat Hussain, from Pakistan, will be succeeding me as the next Executive Director of RCSS. Rifaat brings with him impeccable academic credentials and proven leadership qualities, which I know will be an asset to the Centre. I am hopeful that you will continue to extend to him the same support and cooperation which I have been fortunate to receive from you in the past three years.

Sridhar K. Khatri

Networking CSOs in South Asia: Some Preliminary Proposals

Kamal Mitra Chenoy

One of the many issues covered by the small group meeting in Colombo to discuss the first draft of the Global Action Agenda was the question of how the civil society network should be developed and strengthened in South Asia. The meeting requested that I should draft a concept paper on this issue and circulate it to the participants. This note is a preliminary attempt to examine this issue, and provide a tentative framework for discussion.

There is already extensive interaction among civil society groups in South Asia, but there is no sustained contact among the groups, except during brief meetings that are usually supported by foreign donors. This is because interaction is dictated by issue focus, political orientation, location, nature of membership, and funding. The very substantial lack of sustained interaction among CSOs dealing with conflict prevention and resolution is also a reflection of the multi-dimensional nature of conflict and its causes.

Human security approaches have demonstrated the economic, political, social and cultural factors that lead to, and exacerbate conflicts, necessitating multi-dimensional approaches for prevention and resolution. Therefore, conflict prevention cannot remain confined to CSOs working in this particular area. Other groups like human rights, peace, women's, indigenous peoples, environmental, peasants movements and trade unions among others need to be networked with, particularly in areas of potential or actual conflict. Many conflicts in the region notably the creation of Bangladesh, the insurgency in Kashmir, the civil war in Sri Lanka, and the Maoist uprising in Nepal are based on perceived socio-economic oppression and political aspirations. Thus, a much broader interaction between CSOs then is commonly conceptualized as imperative for sustainable conflict prevention and resolution.

This would be doubly enabling. The CSOs and movements generally focusing on other issues would be exposed to specialized techniques and information and be empowered by this specialized support. At the same time, CSOs focusing on conflict prevention in the region would get grassroots information and support indispensable for conflict resolution. Of course, only on rare occasions would CSOs and movements working on areas other than conflict prevention as a whole be required for interaction. Only representatives knowledgeable

about, or in direct contact with areas of potential or actual contact, would be the resource persons for CSOs working on conflict prevention. These CSOs need to coordinate their work through a network that would serve as a mechanism for sharing experience and expressing solidarity with each other, as well as interacting with CSOs working in related fields. This networking could be visualized as two overlapping circles with the intersection representing the interaction between the two different types of CSOs. Such a network would be useful in identifying areas where further research work is needed to strengthen CSO activities and the type of action programmes that are needed for the future.

This complex network needs to be visualized as a broad forum that includes a diversity of civil society organizations, both large and small, and social movements that have played effective roles in the region. An essential ingredient in this process is to develop a directory of civil society groups in South Asia. The participants agreed to send to RCSS a list of CSOs in their respective countries as a first step in developing the database.

The areas where the network needs to focus include issues of standard setting; application of humanitarian laws, early warning system in individual countries and the region. It was specifically felt that the media should be sensitive to conflict situation and extra-country monitoring of media—like the one followed by Amnesty International with the participation of a person from the country involved—would be useful.

The meeting discussed the possibility of developing a network with subscription-based membership, operating under clearly defined rules/responsibilities for different sizes of CSOs and social movements. This would primarily be restricted to CSOs and movements focusing on conflict prevention. The idea of having hubs in different countries to coordinate the activities of smaller organizations in individual countries was also floated.

The ratio of representation in the activities of the network should not be based on the SAARC model where each country is represented equally, but on the scale of activities in which CSOs are active in the countries concerned. Efforts need to be made to see that there is grassroots participation in all activities and that precaution should be taken to avoid “all round experts” on every issue, who

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Role of Civil Society ... (Contd from page 2)

These Regional Action Agendas have formed the basis for the *Global Action Agenda for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*.

The Global Conference is a culmination of this global process, but it is also a beginning, a moment for mobilisation and agenda setting, for a larger, global initiative of people building peace. At the conference, on the basis of the Global Action Agenda, the 800 participants will develop the plans and methods for the implementation of their agenda, and consolidate a truly global network of people building peace.

Key aims of the Conference

1. To promote a **global and regional policy change agenda** aimed at achieving a shift from reaction to prevention of violent conflict and obtain initial commitments from civil society organisations (CSOs), the UN, regional bodies, and governments to that effect.
2. To develop plans, including specific, practical initiatives, for **implementing the Global Action Agenda** including:
 - Enhancing effective networks of local, regional and international civil society to mobilize action for prevention and peacebuilding
 - Promoting improved interaction among CSOs, the UN and governments in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding
 - Increasing human, institutional and systemic capacities to prevent violent conflict
 - Consolidating recognition amongst publics, policymakers and opinion formers of the legitimate role of CSOs in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
 - To increase awareness about the contributions and highlight the challenges faced by CSOs working on peacebuilding and prevention in their respective regions and local contexts.

The Regional Centre for Strategic Studies was the Regional Initiator for the South Asian Region and together with members of several civil society organisations in the region, responsible for formulating the *South Asian Action Agenda*.

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may not contribute to the task at hand. At the same time the need to interact with CSOs on the ground primarily focusing on other issues, but also working on, or informed about, potential or actual conflict, is critical.

The network should also explore the possibility of developing a rapid response team to respond to crisis situations. In this task the interaction with local CSOs would be crucial. Also since crises often involve human rights violations by state actors, crimes against women, the role of CSOs dealing with such issues and the interaction with them would determine the efficacy of the rapid response team. The role and responsibility of the media also came up again during this part of the discussion.

The participants strongly felt that, while developing a network for civil society in South Asia, efforts should be made to learn from the past, especially why some efforts at developing networks have succeeded while others have not done so well in the region. It was pointed out that studies done on performance of CSOs in other parts of the world showed that those networks that were successful

had certain characteristics:

- a. *Structure*—centralized, small executive committee to take decisions;
- b. *Membership*—should be a balance between absolutist and pragmatic;
- c. *Objectives*—have not a single objective, but work under an umbrella of objectives; and
- d. *Funding*—need to be membership oriented.

This note suggests that the key to successful networking in the area of conflict prevention and resolution is to view conflict as a human problem with all its complexities and diverse causative factors. This would require a networking of an unconventional sort for CSOs working on conflict prevention. This broader, more diverse complex of networks is workable because its core is the network of CSOs on conflict prevention. Not only is such an expanded network possible, but it is imperative given the experiences of our region. Such a network then must have flexibility, accepting a pluralism of approaches without losing focus of the core principles and the objectives under which the network operates.

A proposal for the future governance structure of the GPPAC submitted by the the South Asian participants at the meeting on the Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflicts

The ECCP and GPPAC should be commended for the initiative taken to create a global network and partnership for creating a civil society initiative for the prevention of armed conflict. Given the importance of the initiative we propose that serious thought is given to the process whereby a transparent and open process of consultation and discussion is held as to the future structure and organization of the partnership. These guidelines are presented for widespread discussion amongst the network. It is also suggested that the future governance of the network be given adequate time during the conference in July.

The following guidelines are suggested.

- The main focus for building the capacity for the network should be in the regions of conflict.
- Each region should have its own structure and organization which represents the varied networks and organizations working on conflict prevention and peace building. In selecting representatives from the region is should be based on the population in each country rather than selecting a representative from each country.
- The constitution should provide guidelines for the structure of governance for regional networks and for the network as a whole. and that a preparatory committee is established within the network to draft a constitution for the network. This preparatory committee should be appointed well before the conference in July.
- The secretariat for the network should be rotated. This decision as to where the Secretariat should be established should be taken by the members of the network through an open consultative process. The secretariat should be located in a region in the South during the next phase of the networks growth and development.
- The functions of the secretariat and the terms of the secretariat should be clearly delineated. The secretariat should be only playing a facilitating role enabling and building the capacity of the regional networks. The overhead costs of the secretariat should be minimized.
- The governing council should represent all the regions. The decision as to who represents the region should be taken by the region in a transparent manner. The Governing structure should have a chair, a secretary, a treasurer and others appointed who can effectively take the initiative forward.
- In the initial stages the Council should meet at least 4 times a year to take decisions and develop a strategic framework for action. The strategic direction should be based on consultations from the regions. The focus of the strategic direction should be to build the capacity of the local, national and regional networks.
- Focal points should be selected for promoting early warning and early action, developing instruments for peace building and numerous other priorities set by the governing council. These focal points should then develop the instruments and tools for the entire network. Reports of the work of the focal point should be available to all.
- As stated in the first draft of the consultation process, the work of global partnership should be based on transparency, accountability and responsibility. The information on funding received by the Secretariat should be available to all in its website.
- A number of recommendations will arise from the deliberations in July. The lead agencies for the implementation of the recommendations should be clearly identified. Through this a division of labour based on expertise and capacity could be identified. Implementing agencies should be spread across the network.
- A significant budget allocation should be provided for the Secretariat and for activities in the regions.
- A meeting of donors should be convened during the conference to discuss the future development of the initiative.

GPPAC Action Agenda: 10 priority recommendations as proposed by the South Asian workshop participants Colombo, 8th May 2005

1. GPPAC as model of accountability, transparency and good governance

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a world-wide civil society-led process to generate and build a new international consensus on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. The individuals and organizations involved in this process believe that the principles and values which guide our work towards just peace are also crucial in the development of GPPAC. We are committed to working transparently and recognize the importance of being accountable, especially to the communities in which and for which we work. We aim to make the GPPAC process a model of good governance.

2. Democracy, power sharing and subsidiarity as key components of conflict prevention and peacebuilding

CSOs should work with all levels of government to strengthen institutional capacity and practices for good governance as a key facet of conflict prevention and long term peacebuilding activities. They should strive to ensure free and fair elections, accountability, transparency, respect for diversity, impartial application of law, informed citizen participation, management of tensions through constructive dialogue, and the provision of basic services and goods in an equitable manner. Addressing governance issues on the lowest possible level (subsidiarity) is an important guiding principle not only for good governance in general, but also for strengthening and building peace among communities. To address ethnopolitical conflicts fair mechanisms of power sharing among all communities are essential to achieve sustainable peace, including concepts of federalism, autonomy and devolution.

3. Demilitarization, disarmament and arms control

In fulfillment of Article 26 of the UN Charter, member states should commit themselves to the least diversion of the world's resources to weapons and military capacities. States must reverse the stalled momentum for nuclear arms reduction and disarmament. Treaties for the reduction and control of conventional weapons, including the internationally monitored sale of weapons to adversarial states and those guilty of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, should be developed and ratified on an urgent basis.

4. Cultures of peace: Significance of education and media

Efforts to generate a sustainable culture of peace must be

rooted firmly in the population. Peace education would challenge militarism, patriarchy, and masculinity, generating far-reaching changes in personal and community ways of thinking and behaviour, and deeply question and weaken the roots of cultural violence. The media is crucial for shaping understanding and responses, indicating the great need for independent and professional conflict-sensitive journalism and peace media.

5. Develop cooperative early warning and early response systems that maximize local knowledge and build local capacities

CSOs should further develop early warning and early response mechanisms in countries and regions at great risk. These should be rooted in the knowledge of local groups and complemented by regional and international actors. GPPAC aims to develop a cooperative global network based on the solidarity of CSOs to identify appropriate conflict prevention responses and to mobilize the political will necessary for timely and effective action. Member states should support a more systematized approach to collaboration between the UN, regional organizations and CSOs in order to integrate early warning and early response systems.

6. Support community-based and indigenous conflict management and peacebuilding

Violent conflicts typically infiltrate all levels of society. The state-based international system is often poorly equipped to engage effectively with people involved in localized armed violence and self-sustaining conflict dynamics at the community level. We recognize the significance of community-based peace initiatives to create "pragmatic peace" to enable people to co-exist with each other. We aim to create societies where effective conflict management and prevention mechanisms and processes are institutionalized on all levels. Increased attention, technical assistance and funding should be directed toward this kind of local, regional and national capacity building. In each country there should be professional associations comprising experts on mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution.

7. Governments, IGOs and CSOs should work together systematically to create a comprehensive framework of preventing violence and promote peacebuilding

Governments and IGOs can help strengthen civil society capacities by providing both practical support and

recognition of the legitimacy of CSOs, within a rights-based framework. The participation rights of CSOs must be systematically integrated into prevention activities. These rights should be based on well-defined concepts and frameworks for partnering. The UN and Regional Organizations should accord permanent observer status to CSOs active in peacebuilding and conflict management and prevention and create institutionalized entry points for cooperation within the regions. Governments and CSOs should cooperate to promote human security through coordinated action, critical dialogue and ongoing monitoring. CSOs should be involved at all stages of the development, design, and implementation of prevention policies and programs. This can be enabled through

specialized institutional mechanisms as well as other formal and informal channels for engagement.

8. Provide adequate resources for CSOs engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

We need more effective funding modalities that combine reliability of supply and funding streams that can be quickly administered for flexible rapid response initiatives. Coherent framework strategies are required to achieve long-term conflict transformation and guide the effective allocation of resources to meet that goal. Donors should create community trust funds to support reconstruction and peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict.

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Indo-Pak Conflicts Ripe to Resolve?

Rizwan Zeb

Suba Chandran

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This volume looks at the Indo-Pak conflicts and the recent peace process through the prism of various ripeness theories, especially William Zartman's: when the parties engaged in the conflict realize that a stalemate is reached which is hurting, they look towards reaching a compromise.

Has the Indo-Pak conflict reached the mutually hurting stalemate stage? What made General Musharraf adopt a political approach towards India after initiating a military confrontation in Kargil? Why did the Vajpayee government decide to change its policy toward Pakistan after a year long confrontation in 2002? Has there been a realization that the confrontational policy/military option had failed? Or was it due to external pressure from the international community led by the US?

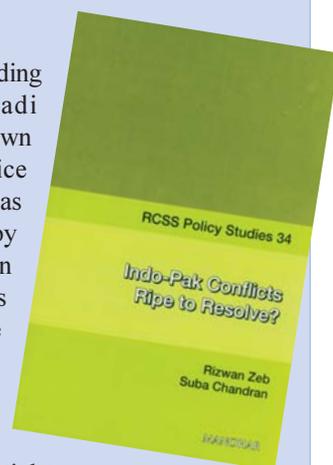
Numerous changes have been taking place inside Jammu & Kashmir. The Indian government has organized a successful election for the state legislative assembly. The new state government in J& K has initiated a 'healing touch' policy, which is yet to make changes at the ground level. The Hurriyat stands vertically divided and the

armed non-state actors including the militant and jihadi organizations have their own objectives. The bus service between the two Kashmir has started and is welcomed by people despite opposition from a section of militants and separatists. Is the Kashmir conflict finally ripe to resolve?

The book also looks into certain preconditions essential to make the conditions ripe and suggest measures that would initiate a process towards a final compromise between India and Pakistan.

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